



ESCUELA UNIVERSITARIA  
DE ARTES. MADRID

## The Film Screenplay

COURSE GUIDE

BACHELOR'S IN FILMMAKING

COURSE 2026/2027



Universidad  
Rey Juan Carlos

## Course data

|                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>Duration</i> | Annual       |
| <i>Credits</i>  | 6 ECTS       |
| <i>Modality</i> | In-person    |
| <i>Language</i> | English      |
| <i>Faculty</i>  | Filmmaking   |
| <i>Teacher</i>  | Luna Herruzo |

## Course presentation

Introduction to the film script with a focus on creation, creative writing and thinking, and to the theoretical tools to understand the construction of the script, and analysis and study of classic and contemporary film scripts.

## Student competencies

|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CG01 | Utilize different historical, sociologic, cultural and/or artistic sources in the creation of audiovisual projects.                                                                                                                                    |
| CG02 | Know the different tools and languages of film, to apply them in audiovisual projects..                                                                                                                                                                |
| CG03 | Know the codes of ethics and deontology applicable to the audiovisual industry.                                                                                                                                                                        |
| CG05 | Understand the concepts of photography, the creation of the film image and audiovisual language from an artistic and technical perspective.                                                                                                            |
| CG06 | Communicate verbally or in writing the objectives and characteristics of an audiovisual piece, in Spanish and in a foreign language (level B2 MCERL).                                                                                                  |
| CG07 | Know the different study and research methodologies that enable the continuous development and innovation of an activity within the audiovisual industry.                                                                                              |
| CG08 | Develop critical discourse in the field of audiovisual creation with attention to cultural, social and artistic changes.                                                                                                                               |
| CE01 | Understand the history, evolution and contribution of film from the perspective of aesthetics, society and ethics.                                                                                                                                     |
| CE04 | Understand filmmaking in an open, multi-directional manner, from the forms and formats that are intrinsically related to the entertainment industry, to more expressive manifestations that explore avant-garde aesthetics and/or auteur philosophies. |
| CE05 | Understand filmmaking in relation to the contemporary artistic and cultural panorama.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| CE08 | Develop a fiction or non-fiction story, from the birth of the idea through to its materialization in a screenplay.                                                                                                                                     |

## *Learning outcomes*

Upon completion of this course, each student must be able to:

1. Know and assimilate the basics of constructing a film screenplay.
2. Understand the role of the screenplay within a film's creative process.
3. Differentiate literary language from audiovisual language.
4. Identify and analyze the essential elements of a film screenplay.
5. Apply theory to practice in writing for audiovisual media.
6. Pick out the strengths and weaknesses of a screen by viewing a film.

## *Teaching methodology*

|            |                                            |
|------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <i>MD1</i> | Participatory masterclass.                 |
| <i>MD3</i> | Problem solving and discussion of results. |
| <i>MD5</i> | Cooperative and collaborative learning.    |
| <i>MD6</i> | Tutoring and monitoring.                   |

## *Course content*

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Content</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>01. Writing in images. What is a film screenplay and what does it do?</li> <li>02. Film constructs its own reality.</li> <li>03. Need for conflict. The cinematic idea.</li> <li>04. Dramatic writing for audiovisual media.</li> <li>05. Film genres and their relationship to screenwriting.</li> <li>06. The Aristotelean 3-act structure. Structural plot twists. Episodic plot and sequential plot.</li> <li>07. General and specific dramatic contexts.</li> <li>08. Approach to characters development.</li> <li>09. Character conflicts: basic, relationship, internal.</li> <li>10. Functions and need for dialogue.</li> <li>11. Characteristics of good dialogue.</li> <li>12. Writing is re-writing.</li> </ol> |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Learning activities

|     |                                                                                                                                     |           |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| AF1 | Theoretical and practical classes.                                                                                                  | 27 hours  |
| AF2 | Classroom/laboratory exercises and practicals.                                                                                      | 6 hours   |
| AF3 | Design and execution of artistic creation projects (individual or group).                                                           | 4,5 hours |
| AF4 | Art appreciation activities: attendance at seminars, visits to exhibitions or viewing of visual/audiovisual works.                  | 12 hours  |
| AF5 | Research activities: search and selection of documentation, reading of supporting material and bibliographic and visual references. | 35 hours  |
| AF6 | Academic tutoring.                                                                                                                  | 4,5 hours |
| AF7 | Evaluation.                                                                                                                         | 6 hours   |
| AF8 | Self-study of theoretical content and independent preparation of practical work and activities.                                     | 85 hours  |

\* The distribution of hours between training activities may undergo changes due to the academic needs of the course, the group and/or the teaching team.

## Assessment

### GENERAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

#### ATTENDANCE

The classes are in-person, and attendance is mandatory, as it is a determining factor in the continuous assessment system, as well as in class attitude and participation. However, in exceptional cases due to health situations or family reconciliation, students may request online access as a methodological adaptation (for more information, please contact the student department).

#### MARKS

Continuous Assessment is a comprehensive assessment of each student's results judged on the assessment criteria described in the following section, on a scale of 0 to 10 as provided in current legislation.

Students wishing to bring up their grade in the extraordinary/re-assessment period must first contact the Registrar's Office to expressly waive in writing all of the marks they obtained in the regular assessment period. Their final assessment mark will be the mark obtained in re-assessment.

#### SPELLING AND EXPRESSION

The grading of written examinations and assignments will consider spelling, grammar, and clarity of expression. Errors in spelling, punctuation, and writing style may negatively affect the final grade, depending on their nature, frequency, and severity.

#### UNIVERSITY WRITTEN REPORTS

These must have a title page, table of contents and bibliography listing at least 4 sources. These works must be original. Excerpts from other authors must be properly cited. Demonstrable plagiarism is an academic offence. If one student copies the work of another student, both shall be held accountable.

### SPECIFIC ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

#### REGULAR ASSESSMENT PERIOD

The teaching team will provide the details/specifications on the content or submission of assessment tasks; this information will be given in class or in a document made available to the student on the Virtual Course Space (in Spanish, *Aula Virtual*).

Assignments not submitted by the deadlines set by the teaching team will receive an assessment mark of 0.

| Assessment task (*)                                                                             | Revaluable/non-revaluable | Minimum mark yes/no | % of final mark |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| SE1<br>In-class tests and examinations (oral and/or written)                                    | Revaluable                | Yes                 | 40%             |
| SE2<br>Assignments and projects                                                                 | Revaluable                | Yes                 | 30%             |
| SE3<br>Continuous assessment: weekly tasks and homework, periodical reports, problem resolution | Non-revaluable            | No                  | 25%             |
| SE5<br>Attitude and participation                                                               | Non-revaluable            | No                  | 5%              |
|                                                                                                 |                           |                     | 100%            |

(\*) Records and evidence of all of the assessment tasks (writings, recordings, etc.) listed in this table will be kept and filed in the Registrar's Office.

#### EXTRAORDINARY/RE-ASSESSMENT PERIOD

Students who have not passed the course during the regular assessment period may choose one of the following extraordinary assessment options:

- **Option 1: Criterion-based reassessment.** Assessment will be limited exclusively to the reassessable criteria that were not passed during the regular assessment period. The reassessment activity will be of the same nature as the original one (exam, assignment, etc.). The grades obtained in the ordinary assessment period for non-reassessable criteria (provided the minimum passing grade was achieved) will be retained and included in the weighted calculation of the final extraordinary assessment grade.
- **Option 2: Comprehensive reassessment.** Students may complete a single assessment activity accounting for 100% of the extraordinary assessment. The nature of this activity will be determined by the instructor and may include an oral or written examination, submission of a portfolio, theoretical and/or practical assignments, or other equivalent forms of assessment.

The instructor must communicate both Option 1 and Option 2 for the extraordinary assessment through the course notice board on the virtual campus at least 10 days prior to the extraordinary assessment date.

Students must respond to this communication via the virtual campus notice board, indicating their choice of Option 1 or Option 2, at least 3 days prior to the extraordinary assessment date. If a student does not respond, the instructor will automatically apply Option 2 (a single assessment activity accounting for 100% of the extraordinary assessment).

## REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT MARKS

As set out in the TAI School of the Arts Student Handbook.

## *Resources*

### RECOMMENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY

*The following texts provide the theoretical foundation for the course content. While full reading is not compulsory for assessment, students are highly encouraged to consult them to support their understanding of the lectures.*

- Egri, L. (1946). *The art of dramatic writing: Its basis in the creative interpretation of human motives*. Simon & Schuster.
- Campbell, J. (1949). *The hero with a thousand faces*. Pantheon Books.
- Field, S. (1979). *Screenplay: The foundations of screenwriting*. Delta.
- Seeger, L. (1990). *Creating unforgettable characters: A practical guide to character development in films, TV series, advertisements, novels & short stories*. Henry Holt and Company.
- Vogler, C. (1992). *The writer's journey: Mythic structure for storytellers and screenwriters*. Christopher-Gordon Publishers.
- McKee, R. (1997). *Story: Substance, structure, style, and the principles of screenwriting*. ReganBooks.
- Dixon, D. (1999). *GMC: Goal, motivation and conflict: The building blocks of good fiction*. Gryphon Books.
- Snyder, B. (2005). *Save the cat! The last book on screenwriting that you'll ever need*. Michael Wiese Productions.
- Balló, J., y Pérez, X. (2006). *La semilla inmortal: Los argumentos universales en el cine*. Editorial Anagrama.
- Gotham Writers' Workshop. (2006). *Writing movies: The practical guide to creating stellar screenplays*. Bloomsbury USA.
- Lynch, D. (2006). *Catching the big fish: Meditation, consciousness, and creativity*. TarcherPerigee.
- Baboulene, D. (2010). *The story book: A writer's guide to story development*. DreamEngine Media.
- Film Crit Hulk. (2013). *Screenwriting 101*. Badass Digest.
- Heisserer, E. (2013). *150 screenwriting challenges*. EditRed.
- Baboulene, D. (2014). *Story theory: The psychological and linguistic foundations*. DreamEngine Media.

Tatar, M. (2021). *The heroine with 1001 faces*. W. W. Norton & Company.

### RECOMMENDED FILMOGRAPHY

Andrews, M., y Chapman, B. (Directors). (2012). *Brave* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures; Pixar Animation Studios.

Bird, B. (Director). (2004). *The Incredibles* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures; Pixar Animation Studios.

Bont, J. de (Director). (1996). *Twister* [Film]. Warner Bros. Pictures; Universal Pictures; Amblin Entertainment.

Branagh, K. (Director). (1993). *Much ado about nothing* [Film]. Samuel Goldwyn Company.

Buñuel, L. (Director). (1962). *El ángel exterminador* [Film]. Producciones Alatraste.

Cameron, J. (Director). (1997). *Titanic* [Film]. Paramount Pictures; 20th Century Fox.

Columbus, C. (Director). (2001). *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* [Film]. Warner Bros. Pictures; Heyday Films.

DeBlois, D., y Sanders, C. (Directores). (2010). *How to train your dragon* [Film]. DreamWorks Animation.

Demme, J. (Director). (1991). *The silence of the lambs* [Film]. Orion Pictures.

Docter, P. (Director). (2001). *Monsters, Inc.* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures; Pixar Animation Studios.

Favreau, J. (Director). (2008). *Iron Man* [Film]. Marvel Studios; Paramount Pictures.

Frankel, D. (Director). (2006). *The devil wears Prada* [Film]. Fox 2000 Pictures; 20th Century Fox.

Gaiman, N. (Executive Producer). (2019–2023). *Good Omens* [TV Series]. Amazon Studios; BBC Studios.

Gerwig, G. (Director). (2017). *Lady Bird* [Film]. A24; IAC Films.

Hitchcock, A. (Director). (1959). *North by Northwest* [Film]. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Hooper, T. (Director). (2010). *The King's Speech* [Film]. See-Saw Films; Bedlam Productions.

Howard, R. (Director). (2008). *Frost/Nixon* [Film]. Universal Pictures; Imagine Entertainment.

Jackson, P. (Director). (2001). *The Lord of the Rings: the Fellowship of the Ring* [Film]. New Line Cinema; WingNut Films.

Johnson, R. (Director). (2019). *Knives Out* [Film]. Lionsgate; T-Street.

Kahrs, J. (Director). (2012). *Paperman* [Cortometraje]. Walt Disney Animation Studios.

Kurzel, J. (Director). (2015). *Macbeth* [Film]. See-Saw Films.

Lasseter, J. (Director). (1995). *Toy Story* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures; Pixar Animation Studios.

Linklater, R. (Director). (2004). *Before Sunset* [Film]. Castle Rock Entertainment.

Lucas, G. (Director). (1977). *Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope* [Film]. Lucasfilm; 20th Century Fox.

McGee, L. (Executive Producer). (2018–2022). *Derry Girls* [TV Series]. Hat Trick Productions.

Morgan, P. (Executive Producer). (2016–2023). *The Crown* [TV Series]. Left Bank Pictures; Sony Pictures Television.

Ritchie, G. (Director). (2015). *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* [Film]. Warner Bros. Pictures; RatPac-Dune Entertainment.

Spielberg, S. (Director). (1977). *Close encounters of the third kind* [Film]. Columbia Pictures.

Spielberg, S. (Director). (1989). *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* [Film]. Lucasfilm; Paramount Pictures.

Spielberg, S. (Director). (1993). *Jurassic Park* [Film]. Universal Pictures; Amblin Entertainment.

Welles, O. (Director). (1941). *Citizen Kane* [Film]. RKO Radio Pictures.

Wilder, B. (Director). (1950). *Sunset Boulevard* [Film]. Paramount Pictures.

Wright, J. (Director). (2005). *Pride & Prejudice* [Film]. StudioCanal; Working Title Films.

Zemeckis, R. (Director). (1985). *Back to the future* [Film]. Universal Pictures; Amblin Entertainment

### FURTHER VIEWING

*The following films are highly recommended to complement the lecture material and broaden your understanding of the narrative structures and writing techniques discussed. While not compulsory for assessment, independent viewing of these works will significantly enrich your engagement with the screenwriting syllabus.*

Amenábar, A. (Director). (2009). *Ágora* [Film]. Telecinco Cinema; Himenóptero.

Anderson, W. (Director). (2014). *The Grand Budapest Hotel* [Film]. Fox Searchlight Pictures; Indian Paintbrush; Studio Babelsberg.

Borgli, K. (Director). (2025). *The Drama* [Film]. A24.

Bradbeer, H. (Director). (2020). *Enola Holmes* [Film]. Legendary Pictures; Netflix.

Branagh, K. (Director). (2021). *Belfast* [Film]. Northern Ireland Screen; TKBC.

Caballero, J. M. (Director). (2019). *El increíble finde menguante* (The incredible shrinking weekend) [Film]. Montreux Entertainment; Trepamuros Producciones.

Chazelle, D. (Director). (2016). *La La Land* [Film]. Summit Entertainment; Marc Platt Productions.

Cuarón, A. (Director). (2004). *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* [Film]. Warner Bros. Pictures; Heyday Films.

Davis, G. (Director). (2018). *Mary Magdalene* [Film]. See-Saw Films; Film4.

De Wilde, A. (Director). (2020). *Emma*. [Film]. Perfect World Pictures; Blueprint Pictures.

Del Toro, G. (Director). (2006). *El laberinto del fauno* (Pan's Labyrinth) [Film]. Estudios Picasso; Tequila Gang.

DuVernay, A. (Director). (2018). *A wrinkle in time* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures.

Ephron, N. (Director). (1998). *You've got mail* [Film]. Warner Bros. Pictures.

Farhadi, A. (Director). (2011). *A separation* [Film]. Asghar Farhadi Production.

Fennell, E. (Director). (2020). *Promising young woman* [Film]. FilmNation Entertainment; LuckyChap Entertainment.

García Berlanga, L. (Director). (1953). *Bienvenido, Mister Marshall* [Film]. Uninci.

Généus, G. (Director). (2021). *Freda* [Film]. SaNoSi Productions; Merveilles Production.

- Gerwig, G. (Director). (2019). *Little Women* [Film]. Columbia Pictures; Regency Enterprises.
- Hess, J. (Director). (2013). *Austenland* [Film]. Fickle Fish Films.
- Hitchcock, A. (Director). (1948). *Rope* [Film]. Warner Bros. Pictures; Transatlantic Pictures.
- Hitchcock, A. (Director). (1958). *Vertigo* [Film]. Paramount Pictures.
- Jennings, G. (Director). (2005). *The hitchhiker's guide to the galaxy* [Film]. Touchstone Pictures; Spyglass Entertainment.
- Jeunet, J.-P. (Director). (2001). *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* (Amélie) [Film]. Claudie Ossard Productions; UGC.
- Kwan, D., y Scheinert, D. (Directors). (2022). *Everything everywhere all at once* [Film]. A24; Gozie AGBO.
- Kurosawa, A. (Director). (1958). *The Hidden Fortress* [Film]. Toho.
- Linklater, R. (Director). (1995). *Before Sunrise* [Film]. Castle Rock Entertainment.
- Lubitsch, E. (Director). (1940). *The shop around the corner* [Film]. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- Maguire, S. (Director). (2001). *Bridget Jones's Diary* [Film]. StudioCanal; Working Title Films.
- Marker, C. (Director). (1962). *La Jetée* [Film]. Argos Films.
- Moorhouse, J. (Director). (2015). *The Dressmaker* [Film]. Film Art Media; Screen Australia.
- Newell, M. (Director). (2003). *Mona Lisa Smile* [Film]. Revolution Studios; Red Om Films.
- Rohrwacher, A. (Director). (2023). *La chimera* [Film]. Tempesta; Amka Films Productions.
- Scherfig, L. (Director). (2016). *Their finest* [Film]. BBC Film; HanWay Films.
- Shinkai, M. (Director). (2016). *Your Name* [Film]. CoMix Wave Films.
- Stanton, A. (Director). (2008). *WALL-E* [Film]. Pixar Animation Studios; Walt Disney Pictures.
- Tati, J. (Director). (1958). *Mon Oncle* [Film]. Specta Films.
- Varda, A. (Director). (1962). *Cléo from 5 to 7* [Film]. Ciné-Tamaris; Rome Paris Films.
- Villeneuve, D. (Director). (2016). *Arrival* [Film]. 21 Laps Entertainment; FilmNation Entertainment.
- Wong, K.-W. (Director). (2000). *In the mood for love* [Film]. Block 2 Pictures; Jet Tone Production.
- Wright, E. (Director). (2021). *Last night in Soho* [Film]. Film4 Productions; Working Title Films.
- Zhao, C. (Director). (2025). *Hamnet* [Film]. Amblin Partners; Neal Street Productions.

## RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

Celtx. (n.d.). *Celtx screenwriting and pre-production software* [Cloud-based software].

<https://www.celtx.com/>

StudioBinder. (n.d.). *StudioBinder: Video production software and filmmaking resources* [Interactive platform]. <https://www.studiobinder.com/>

WriterDuet. (n.d.). *WriterSolo: Free screenwriting software* [Cloud-based software].

<https://writersolo.com/>



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### REQUIRED MATERIALS FOR THE COURSE

Paper and pen to take notes in class.

### VISITS, MASTER CLASSES, EVENTS OR WORKSHOPS

Details will be provided during the course.